



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

# NEWS RELEASE

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## QUICK TIPS ON PACKING A SAFE LUNCH

*September Is Food Safety Month - Be Aware When You Prepare*

What's an easy way to keep a packed lunch cool all morning? How do you help hot foods like soup and chili stay hot? These quick tips and valuable food safety information are being provided this month by the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health as part of September's National Food Safety Education Month. Everyone is encouraged to show their commitment to food safety. This year's theme is **"Be Aware When You Prepare"** and focuses on the procedures necessary for preparing food safely.

"Americans are aware of food safety now more than ever before," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health. The food industry, educators and environmental health agencies will further highlight proper food safety procedures all month-long. Preparation of lunches for school and work require advance planning and good food safety techniques, especially after returning from the summer break.

Some quick tips on packing a safe lunch:

- Wash your hands, food preparation surfaces and utensils. Use hot, soapy water. Also wash raw fruits and vegetables before packing them in your child's lunch.
- Keep hot foods such as soup, chili or stew hot by using an insulated bottle. Preheat the container with boiling water before adding the hot food.
- Keep cold foods cold. Use freezer gel packs and insulated lunch boxes if available. Freezer packs will keep foods cold until lunchtime, but are not recommended for all-day storage. When using paper bags, double-bagging will help insulate the food. Use the refrigerator at school, if one is available. Keep lunch out of the direct sunlight and away from heat sources.
- Freeze single-sized juice packs overnight and place the frozen drink in with the lunch. The juice will thaw by lunchtime, but it will help keep the rest of the lunch cold. If sandwiches are made the night before, keep them in the refrigerator until packing in the morning. Discard any perishable food (i.e. meat or egg sandwiches) not eaten at lunch.

For further information go to [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) or [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

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